DIALOGUE

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2nd Printing .... April 1980

PRESENTATION

The present dossier, elaborated by the Department of Formation, collects the various experiences extant in the PG and organizes them in an ample schema, seeking to intergrate as far as is possible all the richness of the same.

Dialogue, not only as value but also as the explicit content of the message, has played a vital role in the life of the PG for some time. It was the first theme chosen for reflection on an international level. The results, translated in various languages were rapidly circulated among us. The five forms of dialogue for furthering community growth met with wide acceptance and were incorporated into the life of the groups. Later the idea arose of organizing a course on dialogue centered on the religious experience of encounter with others in the light of the mystery of communion. The Center for Postconciliar Spirituality (later the Institute of Spirituality) prepared and carried out the first experiences in this area. The positive outcome of these experiences has stimulated other groups (for example : Spain, Portugal, Colombia, la Reunion) to initiate courses on dialogue, enriching them with new developments. Some groups stress the human phenomen of communication and approach the conflict situations of social life with the problematic of dialogue; others develop the practical aspects of the course so as to organize dialogue in concrete community situations; still others enrich the methodological guidelines for the teams that direct the course.

There is growing interest in the English-language groups and their experiences are equally positive. The translation of the material and dialogue done by the Indian group and the presentation of the various forms of dialogue made by the American group have contributed to this growth. The experiences realized in Asia pave the way for a particular form of dialogue—one which unites groups of different religions.

In the schema presented here, dialogue is studied under different aspects : psychological, structural and theological. Consideration is also given to the varying environments in which men live together. The perspective then is broad and is not reduced to the ecclesiastical ambit. All aspects, without exception, find their unity in the mystery of communion: goal and source of human dialogue.

This broadening of the course's horizon is much in consonance with the spirit of MBW. Yet this thematic enrichment in no way prejudices the monographic character of the course, since the various themes are always presented in relation to dialogue.

In using this material, the directing team must naturally keep in mind the needs and interest of the participants as well as of the time alloted in organizing the concrete program for the session.

The same holds for liturgical celebrations as well as times of prayer that should spiritually orientate each day so that the overall effect will be coherent and profound. These times of prayer will also serve to practice community prayer and other forms of communication in the Spirit.

For a greater development of the schemas, the PG publication on dialogue (in English, Quaderni di Spiritualita no. I; trans. by PG India; Spanish· no.6 (1970) "Opcion" Argentine PG; "El Encuentro Humano" (Madrid 1972) Spanish PG.

As a simple indication of the distribution of time, this can be considered a 6-day course with 2 days indicated for each part. Finally, this in no way pretends to be a definitive dossier. The process of improving our instruments of work is never finished and is a stimulus to continue sharing our experiences.

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Rocca di Papa
November, 1975
</div>

GR100

0. OBJECTIVE AND STRUCTURE OF THE COURSE ON DIALOGUE

0.1. GENERAL OBJECTIVE OF THE COURSE :

To educate in the attitude of dialogue
lived in faith
for the construction of community
as an efficacious medium for the transformation of society.

0.2. DYNAMICS OF THE COURSE :

— In itself the course is an **experience** of communication and of **reflection** in constant interaction.

— It is a process of conversion which

. following from the awareness of the necessity of dialogue and of its basis and demands

. seeks a change in attitudes

. leading to the opting for a program of life centered on the **value of dialogue** as expression of a **person's vocation to communion**

— **It is progressive discovery of human communication in its different aspects** (interpersonal, group, ecclesial, and social) **and dimensions** (psychological, sociological and theological) so as to foster **unity of life from vocation to communion**

0.3. THE STRUCTURE OF THE COURSE :

— Presentation

— Part I : **Dialogue as human experience**

Objective : That the participants

. become aware that the person, as a being in - relationship, only arrives at maturity by dialoguing in the various ambits of the human community and

. assume the difficulties and demands which are inherent in dialogue

Aspects which are developed :

1. Dialogue as aspiration and problem of our times
2. What it is to dialogue
3. Personal communication
4. Group communication
5. Communication at the level of institution

— Part II : **Dialogue as a faith experience**

Objective : That the participants

. discover that the mystery of communion is aim and source of dialogue and as a consequence

. choose to live dialogue as a way to holiness and as a synthesis of Christian life

3

Aspects which are developed :

6. The dialogue of faith : Church as communion
7. Demands of dialogue lived in faith
8. Dialogue : road to Christian maturity

— Part III : **Dialogue as commitment**

Objective : That the participants

. discover what is their dialogue attitude in the face of extreme situations and

. commit themselves to create new channels of dialogue and of participation so as to create a more fraternal living situation

Aspects which are developed :

9. Dialogue and contestation
10. Dialogue and social change
11. Methods for channeling dialogue
12. Conclusion : Towards a new image of Church and of society

Part I : Dialogue as human experience

Objective : that the participants

. become aware that the person, as a being - in - relationships, only arrives at maturity by dialoguing in the various ambits of the human community and

. assume the difficulties and demands which are inherent in dialogue

Aspects which are developed :

1. Dialogue as aspiration and problem of our times
2. What it is to dialogue
3. Personal communication
4. Group communication
5. Communication at the level of institution

1. **TITLE : DIALOGUE : ASPIRATION AND PROBLEM OF OUR TIMES**

1.1. **NEXUS :** Start from the concrete problems concerning dialogue which are met with most frequently.

1.2. **OBJECTIVE :** That the participants
- become aware of the problem of dialogue at different levels
- see themselves involved in this problem
- and feel themselves urged to confront it.

1.3. **BASIC CONTENT**

1.3.1. **THE FACT AND ITS AMBIGUITY**

- On all fronts one can see that :
  - space for communication is sought for
  - the right to participate and intervene is voiced
  - authoritarianism is censured
  - pluralism in all aspects of life is verified and accepted
  - meetings and organiztions are multiplied
  - a more fraternal society is sought
  - a more communitarian church is envisioned

- But at the same time it is evident that :
  - true communication is not frequent despite a great deal of talking
  - manipulation is frequently hidden behind a friendly exterior
  - pluralism at times engenders sceptical postures
  - personal and or group interests override desire for communion
  - social communication media become means of social 'massification'.
- All this makes of dialogue, as it is manifest today, an ambiguous reality charged with problems which call for careful analysis.

1.3.2. **THE PRESENT PROBLEM CONCERNING DIALOGUE**

Observing our own life, the situation of the world and of the Church, it is not difficult to discover the following problems and questions:

1. how achieve a **true personal communication**, surpassing merely verbal and intellectual levels and yet one that can be accepted by the other, without invasion of personal freedom ? Or said in another way, how open myself to the other and create communion and still be myself ?

2. how arrive at a balance between person **and group** so that the latter becomes an ambit of freedom and growth for all persons, rather than an oppressive structure or an ineffectual pastime ?

3. **how organize the participation** of persons in institutions so that they are not swallowed up nor provided with a refuge In the secure space of a small group ?

4. how live in faith the dynamism of dialogue so that it does not deteriorate to a merely psychological level nor yet cover over with religious motivations what is fear or laziness in our communication ?

5.   how achieve **effective dialogue**, one that moves people to build fraternal relations and so avoid making of dialogue an evasive attitude towards situations, and yet steer clear of new forms of oppression ?

6.   how organize dialogue through opportune methods so that they serve as an aid without stifling the spontaneity of communication.

This course wishes to shed light on and resolve these problems to some extent.

1.3.3.   DIALOGUE—SIGN OF OUR TIMES

- In spite of the ambiguity which concrete facts present at times, and in the midst of the problems which we face today, there emerges, vigorous and universal, the aspiration of persons and groups to live relationships of dialogue and fraternity.

- The tendency to personalization, the growing solidarity, the limitless possibilities to dominate the world, the threats of total destruction make dialogue an unescapable necessity, the only way out.
  In this light, dialogue is a true sign of our times.

- Among the principal aspects of the present-day world, the multiplication of mutual relationships among men must be pointed out.
  "One of the most striking features of today's world is the intense development of interpersonal relationships due in no small measure to modern technical advances.
  Nevertheless, genuine fraternal dialogue is advanced not so much on this level as at the deeper level of personal fellowship, and this calls for mutual respect for the full spiritual dignity of men as persons." (GS 23).

- the two-fold process of solidarity and growing personaliztion creates in modern man a series of aspirations in harmony with the development of a dialogal existence which demands a profound and bold transformation of the structures of social life.

1.3.4.   DIALOGUE : OUR PROBLEM AND OUR RESPONSIBILITY

- As persons living in today's world and confessing ourselves believers, we are fully involved in this problem and in these deep aspirations

- our self-realization is at stake, but no less is our responsibility to help others grow and thus build a better world and a more fraternal Church

- during this course we are called on to live dialogue while attempting to shed light on the problems presented and to seek for their solution

- in doing so we are already living in ecclesial communion and Christ is in our midst

1.4.   PROCEDURE :

- Section 1. 3. 1. can be developed through group work :
  a)   how the desire for communication is manifested today
  b)   analyse some of the facts indicated
    attempting to see if a true dialogue is achieved or not
    pointing out the causes of the situation discovered
- the remaining sections, through exposition.

2.   TITLE :   **WHAT IT IS TO DIALOGUE**

2. 1.   NEXUS :   Faced with the ambiguity and the instrumentalization of "dialogue" we strive for agreement on what is meant by dialogue and we search for a definition that is valid for the various ambits in which it is carried out.

2. 2.   OBJECTIVE : That the participants understand the nature of dialogue and its inner dynamism; arrive at agreement on how to understand it; and feel themeselves drawn to it.

2. 3.   BASIC CONTENT :

2. 3. 1. WHAT DIALOGUE IS

    a) What it is not

      - it is not a simple conversation in which we treat subjects superficially without personally involving ourselves

      - it is not a debate on ideas about which we hold prejudices. Nor is it a dialectic confrontation over different concepts of life and its realities

      - it is not to be identified with polemics or controversy

      - it is not a "teaching" situation with imposition of ideas and with the "student" remaining in a purely passive role.

    b) What it is

      - Dialogue is an authentic interpersonal relationship; a relationship which is carried out in the dialectic play of revelation of personal mystery (say to oneself; express oneself, give oneself) and of 'faith' (to be accepted by the other)
Revelation and faith in a reciprocal openness.

      - The structure of the person is dialogal ; it does not exist for itself. It is essentially a tension towards the other subjective centre which lives its own reality. In this way the interpersonal relationship "I-you" which in turn becomes "we" —communion — is born

      - dialogue then is an intercommunication between consciences. The word is the bridge. Each interlocutor by means of the word, gives testimony of himself, personally committing himself to truth good and beauty. Man subsists socially. Socially he perfects himself, socially he dominates the earth: and the natural means of social relations is language. In the activity of speaking, man is also an image of God: revealing himself in the creation of order. Dialogue is at the same time the solidarity of conscience and its exterior manifestation. Like a sacrament, it is sign and actuation of interpersonal communion.

2. 3. 2. THE DYNAMISM OF DIALOGUE

      - Love is the dynamism of dialogue. This is developed in a dialectic process of :

a) Plenitude and indigence

. Consciences are reciprocal. They lay claim to each other because they are indigent

. my experience is poor. When I open myself to receive the exprience of others, my experience becomes universalized. In some manner, the experience of humanity is condensed in me.

. Yet I have my own existence. Original. The others do not have it as I do. There is a certain plenitude in me. I have learned a part of reality, I possess it. It is within me and struggles to emerge. Living is communicable. It is formed in silence, in solitude.

. this "plenitude-indigence" reality shows us to be complementary and leads us to the maintenance of a constant attitude of "giving and receiving", an attitude which is not always pleasurable. The pretension to possession of everythin. as well as a complex of utter uselessness serve nothing and kill the dynamisim of dialogue.

b) Identity and diversity

. If dialogue is based on complementarity of conscience(I have something that the other has not and vice versa), all dialogue is established on differences. It is necessary that you be "you yourself" and I be "I myself" in order to dialogue. You and I each of use irrepeatable, original. In this were not so, we are nothing. We cannot dialogue.

. But at the same time, dialogue demands identity. A common meeting ground. To search for a common base is the great task of those who feel themselves separated by great differences. There is always a common base that brings us nearer to each other if we are honest. In some cases perhaps it is only the search.

c) Consent and struggle

. In all encounter the enriching reality of identity and diversity engender a profound tension. The first joyful moment of identity in which we have experienced the affinity of our lives, our thoughts, our ideals and interests, leads slowly to a discovery of our differences. We realize that we are not so "identical". It is a difficult moment in dialogue. The tension which arises is one that annuls differences. Personally, I can think of two fatal solutions :

- not to accept myself as "different", to desire to be the other. Manifestation of this would be imitation of the other

- not to accept the other as "different". To pretend that the "other" is "I". To attempt to impose myself on the other. Annul the other absorbing him in me.
Either or these attitudes destroys dialogue.

That is why a "struggle" is inevitable. I must make the effort to continue being myself without letting myself be absorbed, by receiving and making my own all that is good in the other. Just as in

friendship, dialogue can only progress through th· o·ercoming of conflicts. This dynamism is applicable also to group dialogue, dialogue in institutions and in social relations.

2. 3. 3.   DIALOGUE AND FAITH

All dialogue among men is called to insert itself in the dialogue of faith.   Only in the light of Christian faith is it possible to know the total dimension of man, his transcendental vocation and his incorporation into the community in which each of us is mediator for the others.   In faith dialogue acquires new unsuspected horizons.   To dialogue in faith is to listen to God.   To take on God's activity in myself and In the other.   Charity is a fundamental element of dialogue.   Charity is not what we ourselves do but what God works in us.   Therefore, to believe in God, in his salvific power and in his fidelity is to believe that God acts in man, that God saves man.   Man has broader horizons than those of psychological laws.   God speaks to me in my brother.   His presence is now for me a manifestation of God.   Yahweh spoke to his people through the words of Cyrus.   God speaks to my brother through me.   Faith always allows dialogue to remain open even when it is better to suspend it for a time.

2- 4.   PROCEDURE

- Philips 6. 6.   With what do we associate the word dialogue ?
Select among the responses 3 expressio: s that are most significative of what dialogue is.

- Exposition

3.   TITLE ;   PERSONAL COMMUNICATION

3,1.   NEXUS ;   Once there is agreement on the definition of dialogue, give
                         consideration to the ambit of dialogue closest to the person.

3.2.   OBJECTIVE :   That the participants be aware that communication affects
                         the entire person and that it is the way to build personality;
                         that in turn they be moved to authentic communication.

3.3.   BASIC CONTENT

3.3.1. DESCRIPTION OF COMMUNICATION

We all have experience of communication and non-communication
- we feel the need to go beyond the level of mere functional relationships
  to person-to-person communication

- communication, while implying cognitive aspects, is carried out also
  through the word, is not reduced to the level of acquaintanceship but
  encompasses the whole person ; it is even fuller if, in addition to the
  spoken word, it integrates the symbolic gesture and attitudes towards life;
  that is to say, if one knows how to combine verbal expression with
  non-verbal.

- Communication knows different levels : from the most external to us we
  usually progress to communication of our inner selves :
  · sentiments
  · lived experiences
  · our hierarchy of values
  · our attitude towards life

- notwithstanding, every man has the right to preserve inviolable spaces in
  his own experience At times one must do so also out of respect for
  others. The authenticity of communication does not consist in revealing
  everything one knows, feels or thinks, but rather in thinking truthfully, in
  feeling truly what one should or could communicate to the other

- When I communicate, I risk since I reveal myself I make myself more
  vulnerable to others. When I receive a communication I expose myself to
  being changed by the other. It is a committing act.

3.3.2. DIFFICULTIES IN COMMUNICATION

- In the psychological order as in the technical order of communications,
  frequently difficulties of "tuning in" originate between the emitter and
  the receiver.   There are two basic types :
  · **filtrations** : we perceive the message of the emittor in a deformed way.
  Causes : our own inhibitions and/or fears
            strong emotive states
            different language
  · **blockages** : the communication is cut off. Personal contact is not
  established
  causes : prejudices, falsified images that we form of others. We do not
  accept or we do not value the other as different. Prejudices are manifest

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in the tendency to generalize; to blame others for the difficulties we meet in life; self-justification.

More concretely, we can summarize the difficulties that arise between the person speaking and the person who receives the message as follows :

The sender

- does not know to choose opportune moments, times when the other is receptive
- does not use adequate language (words, gestures, life)
- projects his ideal image not the real one
- does not communicate **himself**

The receiver

The problem of synchronization has a two-fold cause, cognitive and emotive: and our attitude when faced with the other is determinant. There are attitudes that kill communication. Specifically :

- judgmental attitude, when we make ourselves the norm for what the other says and does; that is, when we judge the other.
- interpretative attitude, when we set ourselves to " explain " what is happening to the other. He becomes another case
- the interrogative attitude, when we want to pry from the other more than he says
- the consoling attitude, when we want to avoid causing the others a hard time, impeding them facing up to their true situation.

These attitudes are frequent and do not arise from ill will rather from the type of education received or from a misplaced zeal.

3.3.3. WHAT IS NEEDED TO ARRIVE AT AN AUTHENTIC COMMUNI- [CATION

Communication is for us an authentic learning experience.
It demands :

a) the unconditional acceptance of one's self : to be authentic with others we must before all be authentic with ourselves. We can distinguish in the individual three I's

- the authentic I: what the individual could become were he to make use of his potential
- the ideal I: what I would like to be or appears to be
- the real I: what one really is or appears to others

The acceptation of self consists then in "exploring one's self in search of the authentic I beyond the images that the person wants to project (the ideal I): beyond the image that in fact I present to others (the real I)

b) openness to others: that is to say, transparency, the adequate expression of one's self. The opposite of openness is the prejudice of self-centeredness and of closing our selves to others. Openness requires a casting off of all prejudice. Only the person who has learned to free himself from his masks is really transparent

c)   personal or congruent authenticity : the correspondence between comportment and the level of conscience. Thanks to this, the other has access to our inner self and can discover by means of the actual I our deep and authentic I

d)   the unconditional acceptance of the other : signifies accepting him as he is, without placing conditions. Accepting the person here and now. Recognizing that he has the right to have problems. This acceptation is as far removed from approbation as from indifference. It is the capacity to place ourselves in the place of the other (empathy, see Rogers). This is really the truly positive attitude towards the other apart from the others.

3. 4.   PROCEDURE

3. 4. 1.   EXPOSITION : communication of life in groups : sharing experiences of communication or non-communication

3. 4. 2.   PRESENTATION OF SECTIONS 3.3·1. and 3.3.2. ; group meetings for section 3.3.3, : what difficulties do we meet in communication ? Complementary synthesis.

4. TITLE :   **GROUP COMMUNICATION**

4.1. NEXUS :   Having analyzed the area of interpersonal communication in dialogue, we go on to consider the group as an area of dialogue

4.2. OBJECTIVE: That the participants discover the internal dynamic of the group so as to improve communication and work in the group

4.3. BASIC CONTENT :

4.3.1. IMPORTANCE OF THE GROUP IN THE LIFE OF PERSONS
- It forms part of the vital space that every individual needs for growth and development
- It is a means of satisfying personal needs and achieving one's own plans
- dialogue in common is a sign of our times
- nevertheless our group meetings frequently produce dissatisfaction
- we all wish to better our communitarian life and our group dialogues

4.3.2. THE REALITY OF THE GROUP AND ITS DYNAMIC
- The group is a new reality that does not equal the sum of individuals that compose it. it is understood only by living it from within
- the fundamental elements for the existence of a group are :

  · personal relations, direct acquaintance of persons
  · cooperation, persons help one another to achieve something
  · common objective, that which gives the group cohesion.

A long experience with the life of groups led K. Lewin to formulate the following profound law of group dynamics It will not be difficult for us to prove the validity of this law from our own experience : "Creativity and the success of the group depend above all on the affective integration of its members and this in turn on the spontaneity and authenticity of the communication within the group". We can say therefore that an inter-dependence exists among these three realities :

· **Creativity** A group arrives at a certain maturity and stability when it is creative ; when initiatives come forth and find an outlet. The important discovery that was made was this : the creativity of the group is in direct proportion to and dependent on not so much intel-lectual capacity of persons but rather on their affective integration. This is evident ! The same persons enter on a distinct dynamism of creativity when they see themselves accepted and recognized

· **affective integration** Affective integration is achieved only to the extent that the individuals find determined needs satisfied in the group. These needs are fundamental because they are felt by any person who joins himself to a group, and they are interpersonal because they can be satisfied only in the group and by the group. We reduce them to three :

  a) the need to feel oneself belonging. Everyone needs to feel accepted and valued by the group especially at times of making

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decisions; a need to not feel oneself marginalized within the group. The individual wants to prove the degree of his inclusion and will seek proof of this.

b)   the need to feel oneself co-responsible. Every member of the group wants to define his responsibility, to intervene in the control of the group. He wants to know his role, what his rights and duties are, and at the same time he wishes to contribute in defining the role of the others. That is to say to intervene in the control of the group.

c)   the need to feel oneself liked. The person wants to have proof that he counts for something in the group, that he cannot be substituted and that he is liked not only for his competence or his resources for what that is worth, but as a human person, for what he is. When these needs are not satisfied, the person will maintain attitudes of rejection or indifference (adolescent reaction) or the will become a parasite that only looks for attention within the group and refuses all responsibility (infantile reaction)

The level of **communications**. The positive affective relations depend in their turn on the frequency and quality of the communications that exist among the members (see the previous theme)

To better understand this group dynamism it is well to remember that groups, like persons, go through various stages and crises before reaching maturity.

4.3.3.   HOW TO IMPROVE OUR GROUP DIALOGUE

What has been said previously already shows the way to the solution. It would be necessary to have present the degree of evolution of each concrete group; favour communication among its members and prove whether or not the group contributes to the satisfaction of its members' needs. There is one means especially indicated for assuring progress in the life of the group as such : it is evaluation or revision. The group grows as group to the extent that it accepts self evaluation

Evaluation is that moment in which the group accepts to reflect on itself or tell itself of its present state or of its actions for the purpose of correcting mistakes and so advance in its growth as a group. It is important to reflect on and examine the whole life of the group. There are various methods of doing this evaluation.

a)   general evaluations of the group. There are certain points that would be of interest to the group to evaluate closely from time to time : the group objectives, the relationships among members, work plans, organization...These points could be the object of a detailed questionnaire and of broad dialogue during a session exclusively for this purpose,

b)   there is a simpler evaluation which could and should be carried out in each of the meetings and which is an indispensable condition for their improvement. It can have as object global vision of the meeting or can focus on one point such as : attitude of members, development of the theme, the function of the moderator, the preparation of work....

- dedicate some minutes at the close for a free and spontaneous evaluation

- prepare a questionnaire for such an evaluation

- designate observers who will report on the progress of the group as they see it at the close of the meeting

4.4.   PROCEDURES

4.4.1.   EXPOSITION OF SECTIONS 4.3,1. and 4.3.2.

Group work :

a) which are the main difficulties that we encounter in dialogue at the group level

b) how do we go about solving them
     Complementary synthesis

4·4.2.   Begin with an **exercise in familiar conversation** : a small volunteer group meets in the presence of the assembly   and attempts a group dialogue. They recive no other directions. At the same time persons are designated as observers to whom the following guide can be given. Each observer concentrates on one particular point of the questionnaire :

1) Freely observe what you see

2) Observe the difficulties that the group has experienced
    - what difficulties did you perceive ?
    - where they an obstacle to the progress of the group ?
    - how were they resolved ?

3) Observe the characteristics of member participation
    - principal interventions: their characteristics
    - did they permit dialogue ?
    - did certain persons remain silent ?   If so, why ?
    - Significant gestures observed

4) Observe the number of interventions made by each member
    - keep count of the number made by each one
    - what do you deduce from the totals ?

After a prudent interval (15 minutes or so) interrupt the dialogue and observers report on what they saw.
Later other members of the assembly can intervene

- Exposition of the theme, with references to what occurred in the group dialogue experience.

5.   TITLE: COMMUNICATION AT THE LEVEL OF INSTITUTION

5.1.   NEXUS : The person has relationships in ambients wider than the small group; in these dialogue is also necessary

5.2.   OBJECTIVE : That the participants discover that communication at the level of institution is fundamental to the person's participation in the construction of the common good: that they feel drawn to create times for dialogue at this level.

5.3.   BASIC CONTENT

5.3.1.   DIALECTIC BETWEEN PERSON AND INSTITUTION

- Man is called to develop his communitarian vocation in ever-widening areas

- he does this through participation in multiple groups. The organization of human relations in these groups demands structures whose complexity is proportionate to their size

- structures are born of persons who organize the values which they wish to live in a mode or style of life. The institution emerges when values organized in this way are assumed juridically by a social body

- the role of structures and of institutions is to channel human relations, assume differences organically and so serve that persons can fulfill their duty to participate in the search for and attainment of the common good

- structures and institutions are a **limiting factor** because they are a "means" interposed on direct and immediate relations and so can become oppressive. At the same time, they are **possibility** because only through them can man rise above chaos and express himself as a person. They have, therefore, an essential character of mediation, and their validity depends on their greater or lesser capacity to make it possible for persons to express themselves as persons in relationship. From this it follows that they must be flexible and functional.

5.3.2.   LAWS OF INSTITUTIONAL PARTICIPATION

Participation at the level of institution is achieved:

a)   when all participate in the working out of what is to be decided; this demands:

- organization of information in such a way that all members of the institution have the necessary and adequate elements nseded to form their own opinions

- organization of the system of consultation in such a way that each person is recognized

b)   when all participate in the decision of what is to be accomplished; this demands the organization of a system of government:

- which is representative at the different levels of decision so that persons feel themselves represented not only as individuals, but also according to their function and their age.

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- which allows for effective participation in the election of authority
- and in which constituted authority is subject to periodical and staggered change

c) when all act in a corresponsible and organic way and control the execution of what has been programmed; this demands:

- the organization of the action in such a way that it develops according to a plan devised in common, with definition of roles and tasks assigned to each person; with the determination of competencies, the manner of coordination, the times for review.

5.3.3. THE MOST COMMON DIFFICULTIES

a) arising from persons

- considering the institution and structures as a burden without keeping in mind the possibilities it offers
- thinking that the matters and problems of the institution are not one's own.
- manipulating the institution for one's own ends
- not giving time to information to be received or given
- electing authority without previous and authentic discernment

b) arising from the institution

- sacralizing structures
- converting persons into anonymous beings
- exercising authority in a dictatorial or paternalistic fashion or not exercising it—thus creating chaos
- manipulating information, elections. . .

5.3.4. DEMANDS

a) on persons

- to heed information and give time to it
- to take on the institution as one's own since it is one way of assuming the very community of persons
- to accept the intrinsic limitation of structures
- to renounce one's own omnipotence; accept subjection to the laws of history and its progress
- to accept and promote constant revision and renewal of structures
- institutional participation demands humility and proverty
- to create times for dialogue if there aren't any; to participate in those already existing; to intervene, to propose. . .

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b) on authority

- to give adequate information

- to create times for dialogue and methods of participation

- to respect subsidiarity

- to promote revision of the institution itself

- to submit its action to the evaluation of the members of the institution

5.4.   PROCEDURE

- Exposition of sections 5.3.1. and 5.3.2.

- Group work:

. which are the most common difficulties in living dialogue and in participating in institutions

. ways of overcoming these difficulties

- complementary syntheses

Part II : Dialogue as a faith experience

Objective :   that the participants

- discover that the mystery of communion is both the target and the source of dialogue and that therefore

. they decide to live dialogue as the way to sanctity and the synthesis of Christian life

Aspects that are developed :

6. Dialogue in faith : the Church as communion
7. Demand of a dialogue lived in faith
8. Dialogue : the road to Christian maturity

6.   TITLE : **DIALOGUE OF FAITH : THE CHURCH AS COMMUNION**

6.1.   NEXUS: Having seen the principal scope (ambits) of dialogue, we now consider them from the depths of faith which gives them their ultimate meaning.

6.2.   OBJECTIVE : That the participants discover the good news of the dialogue of salvation and become desirous to live ecclesial communion more deeply.

6.3.   BASIC CONTENT

6.3.1. THE MYSTERY OF COMMUNION WITH GOD

We can understand the vocation of man to communion only from the revelation of the mystery of God.

The act of God by which the Father decides to create the world, to send His Son and the Spirit is a mystery.

a)   It is, the project, the plan of God for man and for the world whose origin is the love, the wisdom and the power of God.
The mystery is not simply in the hiddenness, the inaccessability of God, but the fact that the hidden and inaccesible God has willed. by an act of wisdom and freedom, of love and power to communicate and reveal himself to man.

It is, therefore, the mystery of incarnation : God becomes incarnate in man and thus makes himself present in the world. Consequently, the world is called to a mysterious integration with its Creator, so that its Creator is at the same time its Consumer, More explicitly, God wishes men to participate in his life and he wishes that participation and integration to be revealed and realized in Christ.

It is the mystery of the sanctity of God which communicating itself to man sanctifies him, unites him to himself, dynamizes him, raises him to a new level of life. Mystery is thus essentially salvific mystery.

b)   Man must respond to this God who reveals and communicates himself by accepting him.

In those who accept him God makes himself manifest and dwells with them ; he establishes an original and new presence.

This presence of God in the man who accepts him constitutes the Church.

For this reason it is defined as mystery.

The Church is not God, but the human ambit invaded by him. In this communion the Church is called to sanctity, is the temple of God, the place where he dwells.

c)   In this way the Church comes forth in humanity which consciously and freely takes God into itself through faith, hope and charity, work of the action of God within us. Through these three theological acts, man gives space to God from the inner depths of his personal being.

The presence of God in man is a dialogal act which supposes reciprocity; it is an alliance which envelops the depth of God and the depth of man at that level in which man makes his fundamental options.

In these theological acts, the Church is fundamentally constituted. In them she has her vitality and her deepest religious dimension.

6.3.2. THE MYSTERY OF THE INTERCOMMUNION OF MEN IN GOD

The mystery of God, his plan, is not only to establish communion with man, but also to establish communion among men.

a) Every man is called from his irrepeatable originality to communicate himself, to give himself, and in his way arrive at full self - realization. Man by his very nature is social being and thereby called to universal brotherhood, to unity.

In conformity with this, God in his mystery has "willed to make men holy and save them not as individuals without any bond or link between them rather to make them into a people " (LG 9) God calls all, he convokes them, he brings them together, he con-gregates them at a deeper level of intercommunion and convivenza, and this people convoked and brought together bv God is the Church. Relation with the other is also constitutive of the Church. For this reason the Church "has as law the new commandment to love as Christ loved us" (LG 9)

b) The relation of charity in the Church is realized in the same way as all human intercommunication, in the dialectic of gift and acceptance.

But in the ecclesial community it is God himself who is interparticipated, whose life is shared. In this lies the originality of the Church. In the Church human society breaks barrier of immanence and situates itself in transcendence. Thus, to call men to the Church is to call them to an ecclesial existence in which God and his people mutually belong to one another. God is the common destiny and the heritage of this People. Therefore the very essence of the Church lies in the fact that God is com-participated and is also its common joy.

c) In this newness of ecclesial relationship each person is re-lived on a new level. The other is understood as he in whom the mystery of God is made present. The other is affirmed in his perpetuity, in his destiny to be resurrected.

The other is affirmed in the depths of his supreme dignity as son of God in which the Spirit dwells, Therefore, the other is always capable of further heights and is definitively valid ; someone for whom it is worth giving one's life.

6.3.3. CONCLUSIONS

Because of this, Church knows itself and consolidates itself :

- in the equality of the common dignity of the whole People of God through the presence of the Holy Spirit

- in the original diversity of persons, enriched by the diverse gifts of the Spirit

- in organic unity

- in unity or catholic extension since all men, without distinction of race or
nation is " neighbour ". Christian love embraces all humanity.

6.4. PROCEDURE

6.4.1. - Personal meditation of some biblical or conciliar text on the theme
- Exposition

6.4.2. - Personal reflection on the outline - synthesis of the theme

- Communication in assembly
- Complementary synthesis.

7. TITLE :   DEMANDS OF A DIALOGUE LIVED IN FAITH

7.1. NEXUS :   Consideration is now given to what actuation of a dialogue lived in faith entails and which are the values it brings into play.

7.2. OBJECTIVE :   That the participants discover the implications for their own lives of dialogue lived in faith; that they also discover that dialogue is the synthesis of the demands of Christian life and that they agree to live it.

7.3. BASIC CONTENT

In the following sections we bring together those demands which have appeared throughout the course so far.

7.3.1. DISPOSABILITY TO OBJECTIVE GOOD AND TRUTH

   a) to love the truth and the good in themselves as consistent and definitive values

      - to discover them, to be ready to be changed by them, and to share them sincerely

      - to aecept the partiality of "my truth", the poverty and the relativity of all human vision and security; to rise above all absoluteness in regard to human values

      - to serve their historic incarnation effectively

   b) to love them in my possesion of them

      - to progressively assimilate them (interiorization and depth)

      - to achieve quietude so as to communicate in freedom and interior peace

      - to be coherent

   c) to love them as possessed by the other

      - to discover with a faith meaning, to, recognize with joy, and to foment with diligence what others possess of truth and good.

      - to promote the values of the other

7.3.2. AVAILABILITY TO THE OTHER, IN LOVE

   a) to give oneself to the other "a priori"

      - to give generously what one is and what one has, spontaneously and freely

      - to wish the other's good, his full realization without personal interests

      - to have faith and confidence in the potentiality of the other

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b) to accept the "otherness" of the other

- to receive him in his diversity and desire him to be himself
- to listen to him in depth
- to be mindful of his situation, and to understand him

c) - to place oneself in a situation of equality
- to exclude all from of unjust pressure
- to give importance to what the other contributes

7.3.3. ACCEPTANCE OF THE HISTORICITY OF DIALOGUE

a) to exercise at all times: patience; longanimity and magnanimity; prudence in the acceptation of the rhythm of dialogue; theologicai hope

b) to begin anew always, reconciling ourselves with ourselves, with others, with reality, with God

c) to accept difficulties with joy

d) to celebrate what is achieved even though it be only the fact of meeting each other

.conclusion : "to follow the truth in charity"   (Eph. 4. 15)

7.4. PROCEDURE :

- Personal meditation on the outline, following a brief presentation of it
- According to circumstances, propose continuance of communication in groups over what has been discovered

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8.   TITLE :   DIALOGUE : ROAD TO CHRISTIAN MATURITY

8.1.   NEXUS :   Having reflected on the demands of dialogue, we now consider them, integrated in the dynamism of dialogue, as road to sancity

8.2.   OBJECTIVE :   That the participants discover that dialogue is a road of purification leading to communion and that they feel moved to follow it in order to achieve unity.

8.3.   BASIC CONTENT

8.3.1.   PROCESS OF PURIFICATION

a)   At some moment in their lives, every Christian, like Abraham, is called to leave all security behind—security built on self-sufficiency and on structures (Gen. 12 : 1 ff.)

b)   is called to rise above the tendency to instrumentalize God and others for personal interests; to enter into himself, rising above his own dispersion; to discover there his own poverty, to come face-to-face with himself, to discover others in their personal dignity and to accept God with his demands

c)   suffers the struggle between what he was and what he now feels called to be, and lives through the painful experience of a slow and fluctuating conversion

d)   persevering in this effort, the Christian with God's help discovers in time
   - the memory and the fidelity of God and he welcomes it as Love present
   - the "other" as deserving of being loved as "neighbour"
   - himself as called to love
     discovers the meaning of life : love

e)   everywhere dialogue becomes an effort and an action of Love

8.3.2.   ATTITUDE OF DISPOSABILITY

a)   Once the liberation from his own egoism is achieved, the Christian feels particularly called by the person of Christ; imitation of Christ leads him to want to discover him further and to respond generously to what he discovers; in this light he sees the others as other Christs, sees God as Father, and sees himself as son

b)   gradually, fidelity leads the Christian to want to identify himself with Christ, to be possessed by the Spirit

c)   imitation and identification with Christ become centered on a basic attitude of dispossiability, unconditional disposability to the will of God; life becomes unified in thir attitude

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- the person allows himsel to be transformed by truth and goodness, no matter the source

- the other is seen as "brother" for whom one is ready to lay down one's life

- perceives the paschal mystery as the very nucleus of his journeying

8.3.3. TOWARDS AN EVER MORE COMPLETE COMMUNION

a) the disposability of the Christian to the will of God disposes him to God's action over him and, through him, over the world. How and when God wills, He invades man and the Christian can then say "to live is Christ"

b) This process "happens" in a deep and radical experience of the mystery of the cross; the Christian is purified in the very roots of his "I" to the point of God living in him

c) this profound communion with God makes of the Christian peaceful and peace-making man, an instrument of communion among men, a witness to the eschatological unity

d) he is man possessed by God and therefore efficacious sign of the salvation which God offers all men; of humanity in his progress towards the father's house; of the Lord who comes

8.4. PROCEDURE

Exposition; silence; penitential celebration

Part III :   Dialogue as commitment

Objective : that the participants

- discover what their dialogal attitude is in the face of extreme situations

- commit themselves to the creation of new channels of dialogue and of participation so as to create a more fraternal relationship.

Aspects that are developed

9.   Dialogue and contestation
10.   Dialogue and social change
11.   Methods for channeling dialogue
12.   Conclusion :   Towards a new image of Church and Society

9. TITLE :   DIALOGUE & CONTESTATION

9.1. NEXUS: After having considerd the meaning of dialogue lived in faith,
we now approach the question of dialogue in extreme situa-
tions, and we begin with a frequent occurrence : contestation.

9.2. OBJECTIVE: that the participants became aware that in extreme situations,
fidelity demands "contestation"—contestation which is an
object of discernment and which will serve unity.

9.3. BASIC CONTENT

9.3.1. CONTESTATION, A FREQUENT OCCURRENCE

In our time the language of action is on the rise. Protests, manifestations.
conflicts with authority, alignment outside the "establishment" are of
frequent occurrence.

- by these acts the participants hope to make themselves heard, to intervene
in the march of events, to make their truth prevail before those who wield
power

- many times they invoke fidelity to their own consciences and the will of
God as the motive for their behaviour

- all of which leads us to reflect on the validity of contestation and its role
in the task of building communion in truth and in goodness.

9.3.2. WHAT "CONTESTATION" is

a) contestation as a postive attitude
It is essential to overcome the spontaneous tendency to oppose contesta-
tion and dialogue. Dialogue is a profound attitude that can manifest
itself through deeds more than through words, and at times these deeds
take on the character of contestation,

Yet contestation in the Church as in civil society is not new. Each era
has its history of acts of protest.

In the Church. There exists a whole presence of this "language" stem-
ming from the prophetic tradition. It finds its high point in Jesus Christ
and through him it is transmitted to the apostles, martyrs, confessors
etc....We can also recall Francis of Assisi. Teresa of Jesus, the worker
priests etc,

In its true meaning, to contest means to protest, denounce, bring to
light a false situation, injustice or oppression. And this attitude springs
from the conviction that it is possible to create a better situation.

b) Contestation and faith

For the believer, to contest is to confront life with the will and in the
manner of Jesus Christ, and to declare in certain concrete circumstances
and situations that the will of God is not being carried out.

In effect, faith makes known to us the meaning of history and God's
saving action in it to which the forces of evil offer resistance. There
fore the believer is called :

- to criticise the present, opposing all manner of installation
- to discern concrete situations so as to discover the action of God
- to liberate, by calling to conversion and by a commitment to the creating of a better future

In this way, when the Christian contests he is exercising his prophetic vocation. His contestation becomes prophecy. It is the Spirit who internally provokes the rejection of evil and the mystery of iniquity; the Spirit of the risen Christ who has freed us from the evil of the present time and gives us the strength to combat egoism: thus, it makes us protestors of the "world" as ambit of evil.

c) **The Church and contestation**

- The whole Church is prophetic and is called to pronounce ethical judgment on human activity. Its fidelity to the Spirit is the basis of its fidelity to man and to history, for only in this way can it discern what is really appropriate to man.

   Precisely because of its prophetic vocation, the Church cannot be "neutral"; rather, it is called to be a sign of contradiction

- but when and to the extent that it does not fulfill its function of contesting evil, the Church is herself contested

- the contestation rises frequently within the Church when it is a matter of authority "contemporizing" with the politics of the world. This can be through its failure to urge fidelity to the Gospel or because in its desire to control it does not leave persons or groups free (see theme 5). Moreover, as evil will always be present in the Church, prophetic contestation in the Church will always be necessary

- when this contestation does not come from within the Church, it probably will come from outside to recall it to its proper vocation.

9,3.3. CONDITIONS FOR THE AUTHENTICITY OF CONTESTATION

As is evident contestation is an area propitious to ambiguity and deviations. It must therefore, be the fruit of discernment. The following points will help in the discernment :

a) contestation is negative when

- it is no more than a reflection of the violence and the coercion that it means to protest
- it provokes divisions, confrontations, not for the truth which it announces but directly aimed at provocation
- it limits itself to destructive criticism—"prophet of doom"
- it denies the function and the service of authority
- it does not keep in mind the procedure and the manner proper to the Gospels

b) contestation is positive when

- it has previously attempted other forms of dialogue and wants to reach fuller levels of communion

- it proceeds from a free heart that seeks only for truth and goodness

- the contestant—person or group—has first contested itself

- it is done without pride or hatred but with humility and love

- it serves unity conceived as a permanent task, called to a continual "going beyond" in further achievements

Under these conditions it will be a positive stimulus to the construction of a greater unity built on the less perfect one already achieved—with its mixture of tensions and conflicts. This is the state of the pilgrim Church for whom perfect unity, definitively, is an object of hope.

9.4. PROCEDURE

9.4.1. Philips 6.6. or brain storming: enumerating acts and situations of contestation
Exposition and dialogue

9.4.2. Exposition of sections 9.3.1. and 9.3.2.

Group work : What conditions do we think necessary so that contestation be authentic

Conclusive synthesis

10.   TITLE   **DIALOGUE AND SOCIAL CHANGE**

10.1.   NEXUS: In close relation to the previous theme this one treats of other extreme situations frequent in today's world and which are a challenge to us.

10.2.   OBJECTIVE: That the participants discover that dialogue should never be an excuse for maintaining the "status quo" but rather that it demands a commitment to the creation of a more fraternal society

10.3.   BASIC CONTENT

10.3.1.   DIALOGUE AND WILL-TO-CHANGE

With everyone who takes their historic condition seriously, the beginning of dialogue entails a radical disposition towards change, towards evolution.

- To refuse to change is equal to losing contact with reality, to building up a myth of absolutism.

- what should specifically be present in the will-to-change is the desire to create an ever better communion—overcoming situations of under-development and oppression

In effect, dialogue helps to form a critical conscience, that is, it develops the capacity to see reality by confronting it without feeling fatally involved in its laws or in a determined system. At the same time, dialogue helps in the discovery of the interrelationship that exists among the different sectors of life: culture, economy, rights, morals, etc.

- A moment can come in which, as fruit of this conscience, persons arrive at the conclusion that: if we wish for more humanizing situations it is necessary to change the actual order of things

- the process of dialogue can itself arrive at a demand for this change. In effect, dialogue whether among persons, groups and or classes cannot be established at any price. It requires prior conditions.

On this point the analogy existing among the different levels of communication (interpersonal and groupal, between social sectors, between countries. . .) is helpful to clarification. We know that there can be obstacles, walls of separation in communication which impede psychological contact. While these walls remain intact, communication will not be possible. When persons begin to be conscious of this and discover, for example that a relationship of violence has been established, a relationship of dependence-oppression, there arises in them the desire to eliminate these situations and so make dialogue possible.

10.3.2.   VARIOUS POSTURES TOWARDS CHANGE

If we observe the real situation of the world in which we move it is not difficult to recognize the following postures regarding change;

a)   normally, those who retain power or control the system tend to defend that system.

b)   others believe that a gradual evolution of the system is sufficient;

c) still others think that the present structures alienate and exploit and that therefore a radical change is called for.

Dialogue then becomes an extreme situation which must be confronted. The third posture indicated above is the most radical; therefore it poses more problems and must be analysed carefully.

Before continuing, it is well to remember that on this subject

- the terminology used is important. The term "revolution", for example, can evoke the idea of violence, disorder, insecurity in some persons. For others it is synonymous with a plan for a better society.

- when we speak here of social change or the revolution we refer to a qualitative advance in social relationships

- the term refers to structural changes and specifically in the political and economic areas that characterize society

- it is a brusque radical change that has to be "forced" in some way A movement of rupture with the preceding system and a creative process of a new order of things

- if it is authentic, revolution always embodies a new image of man and of society

- it is not synonymous with sectarianism although this is a temptation which lies hidden in all revolutionary programs

- it is never a definitive term. All revolution is relative, it continues to be open to the future

- our times, characterized by profound rapid and universal changes, are propitious for these new universal projects. For the same reasons, they are vulnerable to easy "messaianism"

10.3.3.   **How to advance towards a new society in a way coherent with a dialogal attitude**

In all the problem of change, the critical point centers on the question of means: if we live in situations of oppression and violence, is it human and just to repond with violence in order to establish a new society ? Would it be human and coherent with a dialogal attitude to turn to revolution, even a violent one ? By so doing do we not expose ourselves to the danger of any group claiming to possess "the solution" and then imposing it by force ? Today violence is a sad reality; it is both myth and common occurrence

- we witness continuous outbreaks of violence: kidnappings, attacks homicides....

- we are also aware of established violence in:

. the concentration of might and power in the hands of a few

. the state of international trade that condemns entire nations to a progressive accumulation of debt

. the lack of channels for information and participation....

. the subtle ways of provoking and maintaining force (sale of armaments)

Many times these situations are legalized, and therefore those who oppose them are labeled subversive and criminal.

- violence is the antithesis of liberty. It is everything that impedes the development of persons and of nations; it is the negation of dialogue and communion. The greater the violence the greater the negation of man. Violence makes of the other an object and on the rebound destroys the oppressor himself converting him into a tyrant, for man lives as man only when he allows others to live.

- violence is a process that spirals and, if not interrupted effectively, can lead to any catastrophe

The process is simplified in the following:

- the starting point is an objective situation of violence, of making of the other a thing (or at least seen by some in this light)

- attempts to liberate –those who are aware of the oppression give themselves to the struggle with the forces at their disposal

- this reaction provokes the unleashing of the repressive forces on the part of those in power so as to safeguard the system
  Power has at its disposal the force of law and the police

- the greater the repression the more the desire for liberation increases and the more easily the explosion of violence surfaces

This is how Don Camara explains the spiral of violence. It is a matter of breaking this infernal chain, changing the rhythm of the spiral so as to transform it in a dynamism of confidence and humanization.

10.3.4. CHRISTIAN FAITH FACED WITH DIVERSE POLITICAL OPTIONS

Violence is negation. But violence exists and extends itself. What attitude should be taken ? Can violence be overcome by non-violence, by a dialogal attitude ? Christians search for Gospel orientation in deciding their option. They can adopt three postures :

a) witness of love without direct action against injustice. They approach the victims of injustice to give witness of love and hope (the Little Brothers of Jesus, for example);

b) direct non-violent action against injustice. They confide in the moral testimony of their acts and in the strength that is born of love and non violence. They promote different tactics: manifestations, campaigns . . but they exclude the violent reply. They are disposed even to die (Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Helder Camara . .)

c) direct action including violence when it is necessary. They fear violence and consider it an evil, but it can be lesser evil on occasions and the only possible way to overcome oppression.

Regarding those three positions, we all know that classic ethics support the legitimacy of the violent response in extreme cases: ''where there is manifest long-standing tyranny which would do great damage to fundamental pesonal rights and dangerous harm to the common good of the country . . .'' (PP 31.)

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Nevertheless, recourse to violence as a solution becomes more problematic each day. The Gospel believes above all in the force of love and has faith in man, denounces evil, and lays bare man's sin, but it rejects violent means. In the demands of the evengelical counsels the option for non-violence is undoubtedly present (see the Sermon on the Mount, Mt 5; 38-48; Rom. 12; 17-21)

- we need to value that conduct which believes communion always possible; even though it suffers denouncement and situations of temporal rupture, it does not permit the forces of violence to take root in its heart

- those believers who opt for violent means should purify themselves interiorly from the desire for vengeance and should reduce the use of physical force to a minimum. Those who renounce violence even in extreme cases, and even at the cost of losing everything even their lives (Gandhi, King . . .) evoke in us the image of the non-violent man par excellence: Jesus Christ, whose death has saved us and called us to freedom.

  . He opted for the way of sharing the lot of the weak

  . he denounced abuse and social hypocrisy

  . in his Kingdom—inaugurated with His death—the fundamental law is love—love even unto death.

In summary: violence is an urgent call to revise our social, ecclesial and group structures. It constitutes a valid test of in how far we share the lot of our brothers, their sorrows, their hopes.

A dialogal attitude, enlightened by these extreme situations is a challenge to our faith, our love and our hope.

In all situations, even in those involving great risk, we can opt for dialogue.

10.4. PROCEDURE

10.4.1. GROUP WORK:

a) Point out situations of conflict

b) analyse some of them trying to discover

- their causes
- the reactions they provoke
- the attitudes of the persons involved

Exposition of sections 10.3.2. 10.3.3. and 10.3.4.

10.4.2. EXPOSITION OF SECTIONS 10.3.1. AND 10.3.2.

Panel: each speaker attempts to justify one of the postures indicated in section 10. 3. 4. General conversation concerning the panel. Conclusive synthesis.

N. B: for purposes of brevity section 10. 3. 3. can be omitted in the exposition

11.   TITLE: **METHODS FOR CHANNELING DIALOGUE**

11.1.   NEXUS: Having seen the importance and the urgency of dialogue, we now present some practical methods for channeling it.

11.2.   OBJECTIVE: That the participants discover the importance of the methods for channeling dialogue and feel motivated to qualify themselves for it.

11.3.   BASIC CONTENT

11.3.1. VALUE AND LIMITS OF METHODS

   a) Every method is a way to achieve an objective. It is worth as much as it serves in achieving the objective

   b) method serves to proceed progressively and organically towards an end. For this reason it supposes submission of the group to discipline. This discipline and the method itself are liberating if they place a group in a situation of equality of opportunities; if they facilitate a progressive consensus in the group, and if they help to limit the group tensions as much as possible.

   c) any method is intrinsically limited because it serves to channel the relations of persons whose situation is permanently a changing one. Therefore, in each case and according to the objective proposed, an adequate method has to be created. Methods used in other circumstances or methods offered by others as the fruit of their experience, or those offered by the different disciplines, all can be good, but none should be used simply because they are good, Rather it is necessary to either adapt or create a method which in each case, is most appropriate for the proposed objective:

11.3.2. HOW TO CREATE METHODS FOR GROUP PROCESSES

To construct a method, and we speak here of inventing one or adopting one, the following is required:

   a) a clear definition of what the objective is

   b) an analysis of the situation of the group (number of persons, mentalities, attitudes, capacities, culture, morale, etc . . .)

   c) according to the above, determine the general lines of the process to be followed

   d) keep in mind the time available and choose accordingly those group-work techniques that most adequately assure the participation of the entire group in the process

   e) analyse the coherence among the diverse factors, with special attention to the approximate calculation of time that the evolutionary group process demands

11.3.3. EXPOSITION OF SOME METHODS

Resulting from the experiences of the PG of MBW, some methods are exposed as examples and in keeping with what has been said in section 11.3.1.

Varieties of the following methods can be explained:
(see the corresponding appendix)

A. Communitarian prayer
B. Communication of life
C. Revision of community
D. Apostolic revision
E. Fraternal Promotion
F. Discernment
G. Planning
H· Scientific information

11.4. PROCEDURE

11.4.1. Exposition of sections 11. 3. 1. and 11. 3. 2. and of methods A and B because these were already experienced in the group
Some new method is practised
Other methods, as convenient, are explained

11.4.2. Exposition of section 11. 3. 1. and 11. 3. 2.
Group reflection on the methods used in this course
Exposition of the methods not used in the course and which appear in section 11. 3. 3. Practice in some of these methods

A,   **Communitarian prayer** (see the publication of the PG of MBW on dialogue)

B.   **Communication of life** (idem)

C.   **Revision of community** (idem)

If experimentation is desired during the course, after an introduction explaining the meaning and the method, the following guide is proposed:

Theme: **Review of the mutual relationships in the group**

1.   What did you observe that was positive—that was negative— in the mutual relationships of the group you worked with ?
   - in the effort to know one another
   - in the effort to listen to one another
   - in real interest in the other
   - in the capacity to assume the other and to trust oneself to him

2.   Causes that could have motivated situations

3.   The ideal attitude according to the Gospels

4.   The personal and the group commitment that should be made

D.   **Apostolic revision** (idem)

If an experience of this is desired, after an explanatory introduction of meaning and method, the following guide is proposed :

Theme : **Revision of a common mentality regarding relationships between priests, religious and lay persons**

1.   From a group mentality to a mentality of the People of God
   - signs of a group mentality
   - signs of a mentality of the People of God
      · do friendly relations exist ?
      · is there corresponsibility ?
      · is there coordination ?
      · is there participation ?

2.   Causes of the positions taken

3.   Mutual relations according to the Councils
      LG 32:28-33; CD 34:35

4.   Practical consequences derived from examining the situation and from the analysis of the conciliar texts

E.   **Fraternal promotion** (idem)

If an experience of this is desired, it would be necessary to place it towards the end of the course and after ascertaining that the participants know each other sufficiently well.   The meaning and the method are explained, and a group encounter as explained in the publication cited is proposed.

F.   **Discernment in a small group** (see n. 15 of Quaderni di Spiritualita. In Spanish : Boletin Mundo Mejor n. 43)

We present, in general lines, a possible discernment that is useful in determined groups and problems. For a wider treatment see the review cited.

Basic outline

Phase 1 :   information and identification of the problem

  - gathering of data
  - dialogue to pinpoint the problem and to estimate its dimensions
  - formulation of the problem and of possible alternative solutions
  - expression of the consensus of the group on this phase

Phase 2 :   evaluation and selection of one of the alternatives

  a) moment of prayer and of personal search

  - prayer : a "desert" experience that helps one see the problem in God's light
  - purification: recognition of personal and collective sin ; attitude of "indifference" towards which alternative is selected
  - reflection on the alternatives, searching the pros and cons of each

  b) moment of communication and group interchange

  - manifestation of one's own sentiments, motions, attitudes
  - exposition of reasons for
  - exposition of reasons against
  - interchange of opinions aimed at reaching a consensus on a preferred option
  - determination and consensus on the modalities of implementing the chosen alternative

Phase 3 ;   decision and confirmation

  - recognition by the group of the validity of the process through which the decision was reached and the assumption of responsibility by those who are to implement the decision
  - an expression of agreement (public or by secret vote)
  - recognition of the decision by the group, and when it is necessary, by the superior
  - celebration

  Note :   a lack of consensus or a contesting of the process and or the decision can be resolved by holding a new discernment

G.   **Planning**

There are many methods for drawing up a plan, but the essential points can be indicated – points that everyone can accept. If the plan

is meant to direct a pre determined action aimed at achievement of an objective, the essential elements are :

1. Title of the plan
2. Specific results that the plan hopes to achieve (what, when, where and who)
3. Enumeration of the principal **obstacles** or problems that must be overcome so as to achieve the desired results
4. Enumeration, **Complete and detailed**, step, by step, of the process to be followed after overcoming the obstacles
5. Advantages that will result if the proposed objective is achieved
6. Complete and detailed information on the different resources that will be needed for the realization of the plan
7. Elements necessary to establishing a control of the plan that will assure that the carrying out of the action corresponds to what has been planned
8. Approval of the plan

H. SCIENTIFIC INFORMATION

This method of participation in decision making is carried out in 3 phases :

PHASE 1 :

- informative material on the subject under consideration is gathered (documentation, consultation with experts. preparation of bibliography)
- a three - division dossier is prepared :
1) all the material as it is gathered
2) the same material categorized in subject
3) a synthesis of the current of opinion

the dossier is sent to the participants for their personal and group study

PHASE 2 :

- a technical team concerts the problematic into a questionnaire with well-definded questions and with provision for knowing the age and the cultural preparation of the respondents
- the questionnaire is sent to the participants for their personal response (to be answered at the same time and involving the same questions)
- the replies are tabulated
- the technical team interprets the replies
- the replies are converted into propositions for the consideration of the corresponding organ of government

PHASE 3 :

- the decision-making body analyses the replies, debates them and then votes on them

With modifications, this method can be used for a joint reflection by a large group. In this case a study guide substitutes for the questionnaire in phase 2. A synthesis of the responses is prepared by a team

This process has been followed in the Promoting Group of MBW when preparing the studies on dialogue, secularization. and liberation. The process has been named one of ''Institutionalized Dialogue''.

12.   TITLE: TOWARDS A NEW IMAGE OF CHURCH AND OF SOCIETY

12.1.   NEXUS: This is a way of concluding the course by synthesizing in broad perspectives what has been said concerning the problem disclosed at the beginning

12.2.   OBJECTIVE: That the participants, in coherence with the lived experience, will want to persevere in the commitment to dialogue since it is a determining factor in the creation of a new image of the Church and of society.

12.3.   BASIC CONTENT

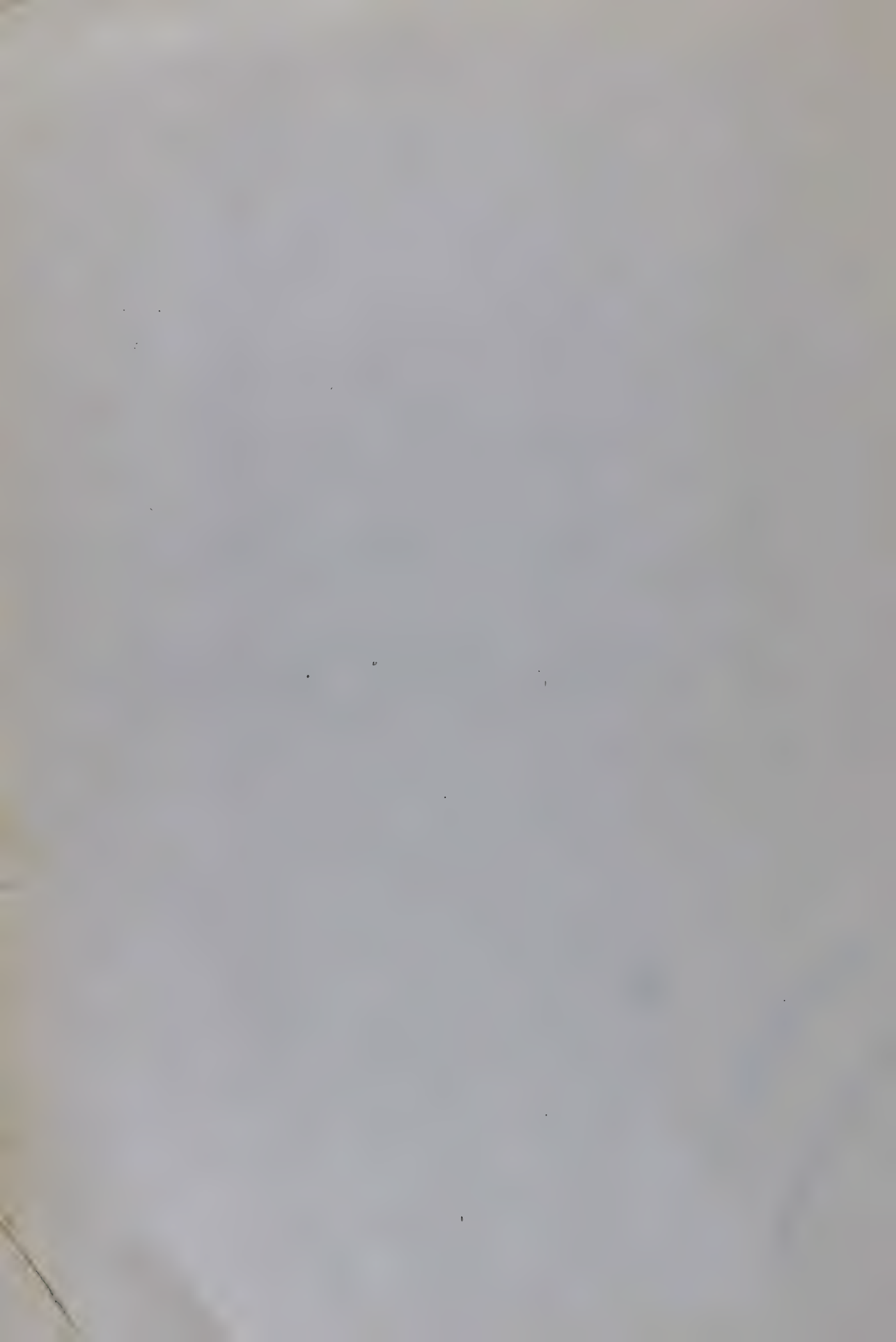12.3.1.   To dialogue is to participate, therefore dialogue

- is opposed to all forms of existing oppression, instrumentalization, and alienation
- makes obligatory the renewal of structures and institutions so that they really be at the service of men
- promotes the democratization of human relationships

12.3.2.   Real and effective structures of political, economical and cultural participation on one hand, and persons capable of dialogue on the other, make a new type of democracy possible–one in which the person is its true and effective subject

12.3.3.   Real and effective structures of ecclesial participation on one hand, and Christians capable of dialogue in faith on the other makes possible an image of the Church that corresponds to its being: Body of Christ, People of God, universal sacrament of salvation

12.4.   PROCEDURE

- Exposition
- Concluding liturgical celebration

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